

Before We Plan: Understanding the Developmental Progression of Language & Literacy



June 4th & 5th, 2026

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Archdiocese of Miami

Heavenly Father,

As we gather together today, we first pause to thank You for the incredible work these educators have done throughout this school year. Thank You for the countless hours, the patience, the love, the guidance, and the care they have poured into the lives of the children entrusted to them.

Lord, many of us arrive today tired, knowing that the school year has just come to an end. Yet these educators have chosen to continue learning, growing, and investing in themselves so they can better serve children and families. Bless them for their commitment, their dedication, and their willingness to keep learning even when they are ready for a well-deserved rest.

Remind each person here that their work matters. The seeds they planted this year—in the hearts, minds, and lives of children—will continue to grow long after the school year has ended.

As summer approaches, grant them grace for a job well done, peace in knowing they made a difference, and the opportunity to experience true rest and renewal. Bless them with health, safety, joy, laughter, and meaningful time with those they love.

Open our minds to learn, our hearts to grow, and our spirits to be refreshed as we spend this time together.

We ask all of this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the difference between a curriculum, pacing guide, and developmental progression.
- Explore the FELDS Language & Literacy developmental progression from birth to five.
- Recognize how literacy skills develop through everyday experiences and interactions.
- Use developmental progressions to intentionally plan learning opportunities.





Activity #1

When You Hear the Word "Literacy"...

What comes to mind?

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CAN AN INFANT BE DEVELOPING LITERACY?





Literacy Begins at Birth

Writing

Reading

Speaking

Listening

Shift Our Thinking

Developmental
Progression

Intentional
Experiences

Learning
Opportunities

Child
Growth

We Often Start Here:

"What activity should I do?"

Instead Start Here:

"How does this skill develop?"

Example Progression

Phonological Progression



Age	Development
Birth–8 Months	Attends to songs and voices
8–18 Months	Participates in fingerplays
18–24 Months	Repeats words and phrases
24–36 Months	Enjoys rhyming language
36–48 Months	Recognizes rhyming words
48–60 Months	Produces rhyming words

ADOM Birth–5 Language & Literacy Scope & Sequence

Purpose Statement

The ADOM Birth–5 Language & Literacy Scope & Sequence provides a developmental progression of language and literacy skills aligned to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS). The scope and sequence supports educators in understanding how children's skills develop from infancy through kindergarten readiness while providing opportunities to intentionally integrate Catholic identity and faith formation throughout daily learning experiences.

Language & Communication

FELDS Component	Birth–8 Months	8–18 Months	18–24 Months	24–36 Months	36–48 Months	48–60 Months	Kindergarten Readiness Indicators	Faith Integration Examples
Listening & Understanding	Responds to voices, gestures, sounds, and repeated words during interactions.	Responds to familiar words, requests, and routines.	Follows simple directions and responds to questions.	Understands spoken language and stories through actions and responses.	Answers factual questions and follows one- and two-step directions.	Answers factual, predictive, and inferential questions and applies information learned.	Listens attentively, follows directions, and demonstrates comprehension through responses and discussion.	Listens to Bible stories, prayers, songs, and faith-based conversations.
Speaking	Vocalizes and uses speech-like sounds to communicate wants and needs.	Uses gestures, sounds, and emerging words to communicate.	Uses words and short phrases to communicate needs and ideas.	Speaks in sentences and participates in conversations.	Speaks clearly enough to be understood most of the time.	Uses increasingly complex language and is understood by familiar and unfamiliar adults.	Communicates thoughts, ideas, and experiences clearly and effectively.	Participates in prayer, faith discussions, and sharing experiences of God's love.
Vocabulary	Demonstrates awareness of familiar people, objects, names, and words.	Understands and uses words related to daily experiences.	Expands expressive and receptive vocabulary.	Uses vocabulary to describe people, objects, actions, and experiences.	Uses vocabulary across multiple topics and experiences.	Demonstrates broad vocabulary knowledge and understands word relationships.	Uses age-appropriate vocabulary across a variety of settings and purposes.	Learns and uses religious vocabulary such as God, Jesus, prayer, church, Bible, kindness, and love.
Sentence Structure & Grammar		Uses one-word and occasional two-word utterances.	Combines words into simple phrases.	Uses increasingly longer and more complex sentences.	Uses longer sentences with growing grammatical accuracy.	Uses complete and complex sentences to communicate ideas.	Uses complete sentences and age-appropriate grammar to express ideas.	Uses complete thoughts when participating in prayers and faith discussions.
Conversation & Social Communication	Engages in simple back-and-forth interactions.	Participates in communicative exchanges using gestures and words.	Initiates and responds during conversations.	Participates in conversations with adults and peers.	Maintains conversations and takes conversational turns.	Engages in extended conversations and collaborative discussions.	Participates appropriately in group discussions and social interactions.	Participates respectfully in prayer, discussions, and community-building experiences.

Emergent Literacy

FELDS Component	Birth–8 Months	8–18 Months	18–24 Months	24–36 Months	36–48 Months	48–60 Months	Kindergarten Readiness Indicators	Faith Integration Examples
Comprehension	Attends to books, songs, rhymes, and familiar stories.	Demonstrates interest in books and responds to stories and songs.	Participates in shared reading experiences.	Demonstrates understanding of stories and events through actions and comments.	Retells familiar stories and discusses books.	Retells, predicts, connects ideas, and discusses story details.	Demonstrates understanding of stories and informational text through discussion and retelling.	Retells Bible stories and discusses their messages and meaning.
Phonological Awareness	Attends to songs, rhymes, and repetitive language.	Participates in songs, fingerplays, and rhymes.	Repeats words, phrases, and sound patterns.	Recognizes rhyming words and language patterns.	Identifies and produces rhymes and attends to beginning sounds.	Demonstrates rhyming, syllable awareness, alliteration, and beginning sound recognition.	Recognizes and manipulates sounds in spoken language.	Participates in rhyming prayers, songs, scripture verses, and faith-based chants.
Print Awareness	Explores books through touching and looking at pictures.	Demonstrates interest in books and printed materials.	Recognizes familiar books, signs, logos, and symbols.	Understands that print carries meaning.	Demonstrates knowledge of book handling and print concepts.	Applies understanding of print conventions and the purpose of print.	Demonstrates understanding of how books and print work.	Explores prayer books, classroom labels, religious symbols, and the Bible with respect.
Alphabet Knowledge	Experiences letters and symbols through books and the environment.	Notices letters and symbols in everyday experiences.	Demonstrates interest in letters, especially those in own name.	Recognizes some letters and connects them to meaningful experiences.	Identifies many uppercase and lowercase letters.	Identifies most letters and begins associating letters with sounds.	Recognizes and names letters and demonstrates emerging letter-sound knowledge.	Recognizes letters in faith-based words such as Jesus, Mary, God, Bible, and church.
Emergent Writing	Explores materials through grasping, touching, and making marks.	Scribbles and experiments with writing tools.	Uses scribbles and marks purposefully.	Creates drawings, symbols, and letter-like forms to communicate meaning.	Uses recognizable letters, symbols, and drawings to represent ideas.	Uses writing, letter strings, symbols, and drawings to communicate thoughts and information.	Uses writing and drawing to communicate ideas and messages.	Draws, dictates, and writes prayers, responses to Bible stories, and faith-based reflections.

Introducing the ADOM Language & Literacy Developmental Progression Framework



Developmental Scope & Sequence



Progression Toward Kindergarten Readiness



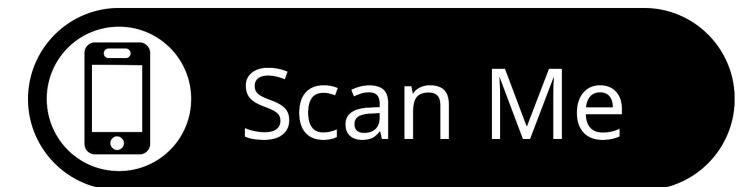
Faith Connections



FELDS Crosswalk



Classroom Applications



Activity #4

Case Study



Scenario

A teacher tells you:

"My PK3 children cannot identify rhyming words."

"What should the teacher do?"

Activity #5

Listening & Understanding

Infant	Toddler	Preschool	PK4
What might children be doing?	What might children be doing?	What might children be doing?	What might children be doing?

Guiding Questions:

- What would you see the child doing?
- What would you hear the child saying (if anything)?
- How would you know the child is understanding language?
- What experiences would support this skill?

Literacy Lives Everywhere

Which classroom tells children:

- You are a reader?
- You are a writer?
- Your ideas matter?

The Environment Supports Literacy Development

What messages does the classroom send about literacy?



? What does this environment say?

- Teacher-created displays
- Commercial materials
- Focus on adult-chosen content
- Limited evidence of children's thinking
- Literacy is something we look at



✓ What does this environment say?

- Children's writing and ideas are visible
- Everyday print and environmental labels
- Documentation of learning and conversations
- Accessible literacy materials
- Literacy belongs to children

Activity #6

Walk Through the Classroom

Where do children:

- Listen?
- Speak?
- Read?
- Write?
- Tell stories?
- Engage in conversations?



Literacy Is Not a Center

Reading Center

- ✓ Dramatic Play
- ✓ Blocks
- ✓ Art
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Outdoors
- ✓ Arrival
- ✓ Meals

Your Role

The Teacher's Role

We support literacy by:

- Engaging in conversations
- Asking open-ended questions
- Reading aloud daily
- Singing songs
- Telling stories
- Expanding vocabulary
- Creating meaningful opportunities to communicate



Faith and Literacy Connections

Literacy and Faith Are Not Separate

Faith & Language and Literacy Connections

Language and literacy development provide opportunities for children to listen, speak, read, write, and communicate about their faith. Through stories, songs, prayers, conversations, and shared experiences, children develop both literacy skills and their understanding of God's love and presence in their lives.

Literacy Skills	Faith Connections
Listening and Understanding	
Listening to stories	Listening to Bible stories
Following directions	Listening to prayers and scripture
Answering questions	Following faith-based routines and rituals
Demonstrating comprehension	Reflecting on messages from stories about Jesus and the saints
Speaking	
Expressing ideas and experiences	Sharing prayer intentions
Participating in conversations	Discussing Bible stories
Asking and answering questions	Talking about acts of kindness and service
	Expressing gratitude and wonder about God's creation

The Goal Is Not To Teach Kindergarten
Standards In Preschool



Final Thought

Children do not develop literacy through isolated activities. Literacy develops through meaningful interactions, relationships, conversations, stories, songs, play, and experiences that help children make sense of the world around them.

Faith Connection

When we intentionally nurture language, literacy, and faith together, we support the development of the whole child.

Reflection

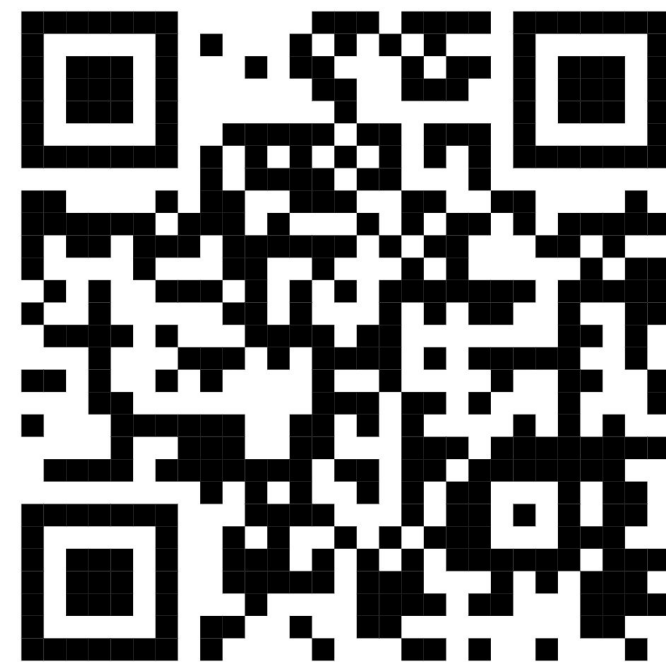
One New Insight

What is something you understand differently about literacy development?

One Action Step

What is one thing you will do differently in your classroom?

THANK YOU



**SCAN ME TO RECEIVE YOUR
CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE**

"If you put children at the forefront of every decision, then your compass is pointing in the right direction."
-Barbie Perdomo